Rashi on Jonah
רש"י על יונה
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Rashi on Jonah

Chapter 1

Verse 1

Verse 2

and proclaim against —My proclamation.

Verse 3

to flee to Tarshish —I.e, to a sea named Tarshish, which is outside the Holy Land. He said, "I will flee to the sea, for the Shechinah does not rest outside the Holy Land." Said the Holy One, blessed be He, to him, "By your life, I have messengers like you to send after you and fetch you from there." This is illustrated by an allegory of a priest's slave who fled from his master and entered a cemetery [making it impossible for his master to retrieve him]. His master said to him, "I have slaves like you to send after you and fetch you from there." Now what did Jonah see that he did not wish to go to Nineveh? He said, "The gentiles are quick to repent. Should I prophesy to them and they repent, I will be found condemning Israel, who do not heed the words of the prophets." [from Mechilta, Exodus 12:1]
and he paid its hire —He paid its hire in advance; although it is not customary for those embarking upon the sea to pay the hire of the ship until they leave, he paid in advance. [Pirké d'Rabbi Eliezer, ch. 10; Tanhuma, Vayikra 8].

Verse 4

threatened to be broken —It appears as though it would be broken.

Verse 5

And the sailors —The men who conducted the ship.
each one... to his god —Of the seventy nations of the heathens were there.

Verse 6

The captain Heb. רַב חַחוֹבֵל, the captain of the sailors, for they, too, are called חוֹבְלֵי הַיָּם, the sailors of the sea; in O.F., gobernedors.
"What is the matter with you, sleeper?" —What is the matter with you to be sound asleep? Now is no time to sleep.

will think Heb. יִתְעַשֵּׁת, an expression of thought. Cf. (Ps. 146:4) "his thoughts (עֶשְׁתּוֹנָתָיו)." (Dan. 6:4) "And the king thought (עָשִׁית)." [from Machberet Menachem p.139]

Verse 7

"Come, let's cast lots" —They saw that the other ships were sailing in the sea calmly, and theirs was breaking. They said, "Because of one of us, this is taking place." So we find in Pirké d'Rabbi Eliezer (ch. 10).
because of whom Heb. בְּשֶׁלְמִי, because of the deeds of which one of us.

Verse 8

"Tell us now, because of whom —Against whom have you sinned, that this evil should befall us because of it
What is your work —Perhaps you were negligent in your work.
and whence do you come? Perhaps a decree has been issued upon the people of that place even if you are not there.
and from what people are you?" —Perhaps your people have sinned.

Verse 9

Verse 10

"What is this that you have done?" —Why have you done this, to flee from before such a Ruler?

Verse 11

Verse 12

Verse 13

And the men rowed vigorously Heb. וַיְחַתְּרוּ, they toiled and busied themselves like one who digs a tunnel.

Verse 14

for the life of this man —I.e, for the sin of laying a hand upon his life.

Verse 15

Verse 16

and they made vows —that they would proselytize.

Chapter 2

Verse 1

a huge fish —It was a male, and he stood there with room, so that he did not think to pray. The Holy One, blessed he He, hinted to the fish, and it spewed him out into the mouth of a female, which was full of embryos, and it was crowded there, and he prayed there, as it is said: (verse 2) "from the belly of the fish (הַדָּגָה)." [from Pirké d'Rabbi Eliezer ch. 10, according to Yalkut Shimoni ; Midrash Yonah, second version, Otzar Medrashim p.219] [And the Lord appointed —Those sixteen days that Israel was missing the manna, since they did not eat it for a complete forty years - God took this manna and sustained the fish so that Jonah would not be digested in its intestines, and Jonah, too, ate within it from this manna. Therefore, it is stated וַיְמַן, the letters ו"י מָן sixteen [days of] manna. Similarly, וַיְמַן קִיקָיוֹן, and He appointed a kikayon, for he ate four omers; therefore, it says four times וַיְמַן (4:6 ff.). And in Greek, manna is called "kika." For that reason, it is stated: קִיקְיָון ; i.e, manna in Greek. -[Sod Mesharim]

Verse 2

[the Lord his God —He combined the Divine standard of justice with the Divine standard of mercy, the merit of Abraham and Isaac. from the belly of the fish —This is Jacob. [Sod Mesharim]

Verse 3

from the belly of the grave —From the belly of the fish, which is to me as the grave.

Verse 4

all Your breakers and Your waves —All the breakers of the sea, since it breaks and parts the sea. [from Jonathan]

Verse 5

And I said —when they cast me into the sea, "Behold I am dead, and I have been driven away from before Your eyes."
Instead —I saw that You have kept me alive all these days. I know that I will continue to gaze upon Your Holy Temple.

Verse 6

the Red Sea hangs over my head Lit., reeds are bound to my head. [Jonathan renders:] The Red Sea hangs over my head. For the Holy One, blessed he He, showed him the Red [lit., Reed] Sea and how Israel crossed in its midst, for the fish's two eyes were like two windows, and he would look and see everything in the sea. [from Pirké d'Rabbi Eliezer ch. 10]

Verse 7

To the bottoms of the mountains I descended —To the end of the measure of the mountains fixed to the deep, I descended.
And I said... the earth - its bars are closed on me Heb. בַּעֲדִי, against me, over me it is closed, and I will never go out. closed on me Heb. בַּעֲדִי. cf. (II Kings 4:4) "And you shall close the door about yourself (בַּעֲדֵךְ)." And so is every instance of בְּעַד in Scriptures, e.g. (Job 2:4) "Skin against (בְּעַד) skin," a limb against a limb.
forever This refers to what he said above, "And I said, 'I have been driven away,'" and I said, "The earth - its bars are closed on me forever."

but You brought up my life from Gehinnom —But I saw Gehinnom here, and from there You brought me up, and, behold, I stand under the Temple in Jerusalem, similar to what is stated: “Indeed, I will continue to gaze upon Your Holy Temple,” “And my prayer came to You, to Your Holy Temple.” [from Pirké d’Rabbi Eliezer ch. 10]

Verse 8

When my soul grew faint Heb. בְּהִתְעַטֵּף. [Jonathan renders:] When it grew faint. Cf. (Lam. 2: 11) “For the infants swoon (בְּעָטֵף),” (verse 12) “When they swoon (בְּהִתְעַטְּפָם) like wounded men.”

Verse 9

Those who keep worthless futilities —The nations of the world, who worship idols.
abandon their kindness —The fear of the Holy One, blessed be He, from Whom all their kindness and benefit emanate, they abandon; but I am not so, but “with a voice of thanks will I sacrifice to You.” In this manner did Jonathan render it. But in Pirké d’Rabbi Eliezer (ch. 10), they expounded this as an allusion to the sailors who abandoned their kindness that they were bestowing upon the idols and proselytized.

Verse 10

for the salvation of the Lord —Vows of peace-offerings and thanksgiving offerings I will pay, for the salvation of the Lord. for the salvation Heb. יְשׁוּעָתָה, like לִישׁוּעָה, for the salvation. Cf. (Ps. 44: 27) “Rise for our aid (עֶזְרָתָה),” equivalent to לְעֶזְרָה

Chapter 3

Verse 1

Verse 2

Verse 3

Verse 4

overturned Destroyed. [He did not say, “Destroyed,” because “overturned” has two meanings, bad and good. If they do not repent, it will be destroyed; if they repent, then “overturned” refers to the people of Nineveh, that they will be changed from bad to good, and they will repent. Gloss of Rabbi Akiva(?)]

Verse 5

Verse 6

his royal robe Heb. אַדַּרְתּוֹ, the cloak of his honor.

Verse 7

And he caused it to be proclaimed Heb. וַיַּזְעֵק, he commanded to proclaim By the counsel of the king and his nobles —By the counsel of the king and his nobles, they commanded to announce.

Verse 8

and they shall call mightily to God —They bound the dams alone and the young alone. They said to Him, "Lord of the world! If You have no pity on us, we will not have pity on these." [See Taanith 16a]

Verse 9

Whoever knows —the sins he has committed, shall repent.

Verse 10

and God will relent —He will think about the evil to repent of it.

Chapter 4

Verse 1

Now it displeased Jonah —He said, "Now the nations will say that I am a false prophet." [from Pirké d'Rabbi Eliezer ch. 10]

Verse 2

was this not my contention —I know that, if they repent, You will not destroy them, and I will appear to them as a liar.

Verse 3

Verse 4

Verse 5

Verse 6

appointed Heb. וַיְמַן, an expression of preparation. [from Jonathan]
to save him from his discomfort —From the heat of the sun.
kikayon —A plant that grows high with many branches and it affords shade and that is its name.

Verse 7

attacked Heb. וַתַּךְ. The worm attacked the kikayon. Where one would say for masculine וַיַּךְ, he struck, he says for feminine וַתַּךְ, she struck.

Verse 8

stilling Heb. חֲרִישִׁית. Our Sages say: When it blows, it silences all the winds because of it, and it is very hot. So does Jonathan render: silencing. [from Gittin 31b]
and he fainted Heb. וַיִּתְעַלָּף, pasmer (pamer), in O.F.

Verse 9

Verse 10

for which you did not toil —with plowing, sowing, or watering.
one night Heb. בְּנוֹ-לֵילָה, lit., one night old, like בֶּן לֵילָה. It grew only one night.

Verse 11

who do not know etc. —I.e, children.
and many beasts as well —Adult, who have the intelligence of beasts, who do not recognize who created them.